




Department of  
Rehabilitation & Correction

<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>Jehovah Witness Religious Services</b>	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>2</u>
	<b>NUMBER: 72-REG-05</b>
<b>RULE/CODE REFERENCE:</b>	<b>SUPERSEDES:</b> 72-REG-05 dated 01/25/09
<b>RELATED ACA STANDARDS:</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> <b>February 12, 2018</b>
	<b>APPROVED:</b> 

## I. AUTHORITY

Ohio Revised Code 5120.01 authorizes the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, as the executive head of the department, to direct the total operations and management of the department by establishing procedures as set forth in this policy.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to chaplains, administrators and staff in managing and providing for the religious activities and practices of inmates in the custody of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC). This policy is intended to be permissive rather than restrictive. The observances and religious items listed are generally approved accommodations for qualified inmates wishing to practice the subject faith. Additional observances or practices maybe permitted pursuant to DRC Policy 72-REG-02, Religious Accommodations.

## III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to employees, independent contractors and volunteers of the DRC who provide or assist in providing religious services.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

**Elder** - A Jehovah Witness clergyman approved and credentialed by the organization's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York.

**Immersion** - Complete submersion in water, the mode of baptism for Jehovah Witnesses.

**Memorial of Christ's Death/Lord's Evening Meal** - Religious observance at Passover.

**New World Translation** - Official version of the Bible for Jehovah Witnesses.

**Watchtower Bible and Tract Society** - Official name of the Jehovah Witness organization, headquartered in Brooklyn, New York.

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It is the policy of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) that inmates, who wish to do, may subscribe to any religious belief they choose. Inmate religious practices, as opposed to belief, may be subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions. Inmate participation in religious activities shall be voluntary. The opportunity for inmates to engage in particular religious practices shall be subject to the legitimate departmental or institutional interests and concerns, including security, safety, health, discipline, rehabilitation, order, and the limitations or allocation of resources.

**VI. PROCEDURES**

- A. Congregate Worship: An elder credentialed by the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York may conduct worship services and lead meetings. Meetings may be held on any day of the week. Although Christian in origin, Jehovah Witnesses do not consider themselves part of mainstream Christianity. Therefore, for purposes of accommodation, they are not considered within Protestantism. For purposes of this policy, determination of an inmate's standing or membership as a practitioner of this faith shall be made either by the person providing religious services for the institution housing that individual or by an Elder consulted by the religious services administrator.
- B. Individual worship: No special provisions.
- C. Dietary requirements: No specific religious dietary requirements are noted.
- D. Holy Days: - Once a year, a special observance of the "Lord's Evening Meal", also called "Memorial of Christ's Death" is held. This meeting is held on Nisan 14 of the Jewish calendar. The items used are unleavened bread and red wine. Water or grape juice will be substituted for the red wine in the institutions. This ceremony is to take place after sunset.
- E. Holy Book - The preferred Bible is "The New World Translation"; however, a King James Version may be used.
- F. Medical: The Jehovah Witness practice is to refuse whole blood, packed-cell, and plasma blood transfusions. Other non-blood treatments are acceptable (**i.e.**, non-blood volume expanders).
- G. Work Proscriptions: No specific requirements are noted.
- H. Religious Property: No specific religious requirements are noted.
- I. Grooming: No specific religious requirements are noted.
- J. Religious Leaders: Any congregate services must be led or supervised by approved religious leaders identified as outside volunteers, independent contractors, or employees of DRC.
- K. Inmates may not lead any groups.
- L. Death and Burial: No specific religious requirements are noted.